

Message Text

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S E C R E T ATHENS 3220

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MARR, GR, US
SUBJECT: US-GREEK BASE NEGOTIATIONS: FIRST MEETING OF SUBGROUP
ON HOME PORTING

REF: ATHENS 3175

1. HOME PORTING SUBGROUP COMPOSED OF HELLENIC NAVY OFFICERS
AND US REPRESENTATIVES MET MORNING OF APRIL 25 TO DISCUSS
QUESTIONS RAISED BY US ACCESSION TO GOG REQUEST THAT HOME-
PORTING BE TERMINATED. THESE INCLUDED LEGAL ASPECTS OF THE
HOMEPORTING AGREEMENT, PRESENCE IN ATHENS OF STAFF OF CTF
SIXTY, FLEET SUPPORT OFFICE, SHIP REPAIR OFFICE AND
DESRON 12 PERSONNEL AND THEIR DEPENDENTS, AS WELL AS THE
QUESTION OF FACILITIES, INCLUDING THE PIER AND OTHER LEASED
PROPERTY.

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2. EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON STATUS OF PIER AFTER DEPARTURE OF HOMEPOROTED UNITS INCLUDED EXPRESSION OF A STRONG DESIRE ON PART OF US SIDE THAT USN BE PERMITTED TO CONTINUE USE OF PIER FOR RELATIVELY FREQUENT SHIP VISITS AND RESPONSE BY HN OFFICERS THAT FROM HELLENIC NAVY POINT OF VIEW USN UNITS WOULD BE WELCOME AT OTHER SITES IN ATHENS AREA, BUT NOT TO ELEFSIS PIER. WHEN US SIDE PERSISTED IN EXPRESSING ITS DESIRE FOR CONTINUED USE OF ELEFSIS FACILITY AND OUTLINED SERIOUS FINANCIAL PROBLEMS WHICH WOULD BE POSED BY ITS TERMINATION, GREEKS INDICATED THAT THEY WOULD HAVE TO CONSULT WITH HIGHER AUTHORITY.

3. AFTER STRESSING THAT IT HAD NO AUTHORITY TO DO SO, GREEK SIDE THEN MADE AN INFORMAL AND IMPROMPTU PROPOSAL WHICH MIGHT MEET USN NEEDS WHILE AT THE SAME TIME CONFORMING WITH GREEK POLITICAL NECESSITIES. THIS PROPOSAL INCLUDED FOLLOWING ELEMENTS:

A. PIER COMPLEX WOULD COME UNDER CONTROL OF HELLENIC NAVY (HN) WITH USN PROVIDING FUNDS FOR OPERATION, MAINTENANCE, LEASE COSTS AND SECURITY FUNCTIONS, ALTHOUGH HN WOULD HAVE MINIMAL PRESENCE. THE EXISTING MOBILE UTILITY SUPPORT EQUIPMENT (MUSE), OTHER UTILITY SERVICE FACILITIES AND THE CALIBRATION VANS WOULD BE RETAINED IN THE COMPLEX.

B. SHARED USE OF FACILITIES BY HN AND USN UNITS IN ORDER TO GIVE SUBSTANCE TO HN ASSUMPTION OF CONTROL, ALTHOUGH HN DID NOT NEED THIS PIER SPACE.

C. COMMON UTILIZATION OF USN TENDER DURING ITS VISITS TO PIER (NEXT SUCH VISIT UNDERSTOOD BY HN TO BE SCHEDULED FOR JULY 1975), PERHAPS WITHOUT PAYMENT OF LABOR COSTS.

4. US SIDE EXPRESSED PERSONAL AND INFORMAL OPINION THAT SUCH A PROPOSAL FOR CONTINUED PIER USE WOULD BE FAVORABLY RECEIVED BY US AND OPTIMISM THAT SOME AGREEMENT FAVORABLE TO HN COULD BE REACHED ON HN USE OF TENDER CAPABILITY, PROVIDED USN WAS AFFORDED SUFFICIENT USE OF THE PIER TO MAKE SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT ECONOMICALLY VIABLE. US SIDE THEN INQUIRED ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF RETAINING SOME PORTION OF SHIP REPAIR OFFICE (SRO) AND FLEET SUPPORT OFFICE (FSO),

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ON A SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCED BASIS, TO PROVIDE FOR SHIPYARD COORDINATION AS WELL AS SHIP VISIT LIAISON SUPPORT, SHOULD CONTINUED USE OF THE PIER PROVE FEASIBLE. GREEK SIDE FELT THAT THIS MIGHT BE POSSIBLE BUT THAT SOME EXTERNAL CHANGES WOULD BE REQUIRED TO ASSUAGE GREEK POLITICAL SENSITIVITIES. GREEK SIDE ALSO OBSERVED THAT SHOULD ITS PROPOSAL NOT MEET WITH MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS APPROVAL, USN SHIP VISITS WOULD HAVE TO BE ACCOMMODATED AT OTHER HN/

COMMERCIAL FACILITIES. US SIDE ESTIMATED THT USN WORK AT GREEK SHIPYARDS WOULD VIRTUALLY CEASE SHOULD USE OF PIER AND EXISTENCE OF SRO BE DENIED, NOTING THAT SRO-SPONSORED WORK ON USN SHIPS HAD RESULTED IN A SIGNIFICANT REPAIR EXPERTISE IN GREEK SHIPYARDS - A CAPABILITY OF CONSIDERABLE VALUE TO HN - WOULD THEREBY BE LOST.

5. GREEK SIDE INDICATED THAT PERIODIC JOINT USE OF USN TENDER WOULD BE STRONG POINT IN SELLING ITS PROPOSAL AND SUGGESTED THAT OCCASIONAL USE OF HN SALAMIS FACILITY BY USN UNITS MIGHT ALSO BE USEFUL. US SIDE EMPHASIZED COMPLETE FLEXIBILITY OF SUCH MATTERS AND STRESSED POINT OF PRIME INTEREST WAS CONTINUED USE OF THE PIER.

6. TURNING TO OTHER ISSUES, US SIDE EXPLAINED THAT THERE WERE TWO OTHER LONG TERM PROPERTY LEASES WHICH PRESENTED A MAJOR FINANCIAL PROBLEM TO THE USN BECAUSE OF THE TERMINATION OF HOMEPORTING. THESE WERE THE RECREATION FACILITY AT MAGOULA AND THE SCHOOL AT EKALI, THE COMBINED UNEXPIRED LEASE VALUE OF WHICH EXCEEDED \$1 MILLION. THE US SIDE NOTED THAT IT WOULD HAVE TO EXAMINE THE POSSIBILITY OF THE APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLE OF FORCE MAJEUR TO THESE LEASES AND NOTED THAT RESOLUTION OF THESE MATTERS COULD HAVE FINANCIAL IMPACT ON GOG. GREEK SIDE OBSERVED THAT THIS WAS NOT AN HN PROBLEM AND USGGESTED THAT IT BE ADDRESSED BY LEGAL EXPERTS.

7. MEETING CONCLUDED WITH GREEK SIDE INDICATING INTENTION COMMUNICATE ITS PROPOSAL TO AMBASSADOR CALOGERAS. US SIDE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THE FORTHCOMING ATTITUDE OF THE GREEK SIDE AND EMPHASIZED US FLEXIBILITY. US SIDE AGAIN STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF CONTINUED USE OF PIER AND ATTENDANT NORMALIZATION OF SHIP VISIT.

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8. COMMENT: SHILE GREEK SIDE WAS BOTH FORTHCOMING AND POSITIVE IN THE FIRST MEETING OF THIS SUBFROUP, PARTICULARLY CONCERNING CONTINUED USE OF FACILITIES AT ELEFSIS, THEY WERE WITHOUT INSTRUCTIONS AND SEEMED TO REFLECT POSITIVE ATTITUDE OF HN RATHER THAN LESS FORTHCOMING ATTITUDE OBSERVED FROM POLITICAL LEVEL OF GOG. PRACTICAL PROBLEMS WEE EXPLAINED FULLY TO GREEK SIDE, BUT LEGAL PROBLEMS CLEARLY WILL HAVE TO BE MORE FULLY DEFINED AND REVIEWED IN A SESSION IN WHICH A GREEK LAWYER TAKES PART. WE WOULD NOT WISH UNWARRANTED OPTIMISM TO RESULT FROM HN RECEPTIVENESS TO US IDEAS RE SHIP VISITS, AS THE HELPFUL ATTITUDE OF THE HN DOES NOT ACCORD WITH INDICATIONS RECEIVED OF POLITICAL ASSESSMENT BY GOG OF PRACTICALITY OF SHIP VISITS.

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